

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 TRSE-00 /091 W

-----160718Z 095187 /13

R 151745Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4030

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

CONFIDENTIAL ROME 6237

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, CG

SUBJECT: ZAIRE, FRANCE, AND THE ITALIAN REACTION

REF: PARIS 10771

1. SUMMARY: GOI WAS NEITHER CONSULTED NOR FOREWARNED
BEFORE THE FRENCH ACTION ON BEHALF OF ZAIRE, AND IS
TAKING MINIMUM PAINS TO MAKE THAT FACT, AND ITS IRRITATION,
CLAR. END SUMMARY. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

2. FOLLOWING GISCARD'S APRIL 12 TELEVISION PRESS CONFERENCE,
THE GOI WASTED NO TIME LETTING IT BE KNOWN THAT, AT LEAST
AS FAR AS ITALY IS CONCERNED, THERE WAS NO BILATERAL
CONSULTATION OR WARNING PRIOR TO GISCARD'S ANNOUNCEMENT.
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NOR, ACCORDING TO UNNAMED ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY
SPOKESMAN QUOTED IN THE ITALIAN PRESS ON APRIL 13,
WAS THERE CONSULTATION THROUGH THE EC. IN THE CIRCUM-
STANCES, ITALY TAKES A DIM VIEW OF GISCARD'S, AND
FRANCE'S, PRETENSION TO BE THE CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH
EUROPE HAS "MANIFESTED ITSELF".

3. REINFORCING THIS INFORMAL DISCLAIMER, FOREIGN
MINISTER FORLANI IS QUOTED IN TODAY'S ITALIAN WIRE
SERVICE AS HAVING TOLD THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS THIS
MORNING THAT "FROM A PHRASE (OF GISCARD'S ANNOUNCEMENT)
IT HAD BEEN ERRONEOUSLY INFERRED, AT LEAST AS REGARDS
ITALY, THAT THE EUROPEAN PARTNERS HAD BEEN INFORMED BEFORE-
HAND OF THE INTERVENTION". THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE COUNCIL
OF MINISTER'S REPEATS THAT "AS REGARDS THE INITIATIVE
TAKEN IN THIS MATTER BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, IT HAS BEEN
MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NOT CONSULTATION WITH THE ITALIAN
GOVERNENT" AND THAT THE SUBJECT WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE
DC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AT THEIR MEETING IN LONDON ON
APRIL 18. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. AUTHORITATIVE FOREIGN MINISTRY SURCE AFFIRMED TO EMBOFF
THAT ONLY WORD ITALY HAD RECEIVED FROM FRANCE HAD BEEN A
COMMUNICATION ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 12, WELL AFTER THE
DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN, IN A FORM INDICATING THAT IT HAD NOT
BEEN TAILORED FOR THE NINE BUT FOR THE CONSUMPTION OF A GREAT
MANY GOVERNEMNTS. THERE HAD BEEN NO QUESTION OF
CONSULTATION EITHER BILATERALLY OR THROUGH THE NINE'S
ESTABLISHED POLITICAL MECHANISM. THIS FAILURE TO
CONSULT WAS IN ITSELF A MISTAKE, BUT HAD BEEN
COMPOUNDED BY GISCARD'S CLAIM TO THE CONTRARY, WHICH
PUT OTHER GOVERNMENTS ON THE SPOT, MADE THEM SEMM LIKE
ACCESSORIES BEFORE THE FACT, AND FORCED THEM TO PUBLIC
DENIALS.

5. AT A MORE SIGNIFICANT LEVEL, HOWEVER, THE GOI FEELS
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THAT INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE CONFLICT IN SHABA IS A
MISTAKE, AND THAT FRANCE'S ACTION AND CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR
EUROPE TEND TO PULL EUROPE INTO THE PROBLEM WITHOUT ITS
PRIOR ASSENT.

6. COMMENT: IF OTHER EC NINE GOVERNMENTS ARE AS IRATE ON
PROTOCOLAIRE AND SUBSTANTIVE GROUNDS AS IALY SEEMS TO BE
TODAY, THE FRENCH MAY FIND THE CLIMATE IN LONDON EXCEEDING
WARM.GARDNER

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Message Attributes

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